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ABSTRACT

The interactions of the teaching act are extremely complicated and have not been codified for easy use; this has made it difficult for teachers to judge the teaching act. A paradigm for analyzing the teaching act is: subject matter of this nature, in this amount, for this purpose, with motivational activities and methodologies of these types, in this situation or setting, and with a teacher with this disposition, this background, and these qualities and attitudes produces these patterns of affective and cognitive learning in students at this level of development and maturity, with this kind of experience and with this kind of background. When any component of this paradigm is changed, then the patterns of affective and cognitive learning are changed. (An illustration of the use of the paradigm in teaching "Romeo and Juliet" is included. (TJ)

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Paradigm with Panache or Why Was I So Good in Class Today?*

by

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"It's maddening! I thought my lesson for the fifth period had everything going for it; but it bombed, and I can't understand why. Maybe I just don't know how to teach anymore." I am sure that on some recent occasion either you have heard such sentiments expressed or have felt them yourself.

But contrariwise, you may have had the opposite kind of experience; you may have prepared a lesson which seemed quite ordinary to you, but which caught fire with your students and exploded with excitement and interest; and, again, you really were not sure what had caused the result. Often we teachers do not know why we succeed or why we don't.

I believe our inability to analyze our own or others' teaching stems from two sources: first, the interactions of the teaching act are extremely complicated; and, second, those intricate interactions have not been codified for easy use. As a result, we judge the teaching act by outward appearances, by intuition, or by some inconsequential classroom accident. It is apparent that with the trend toward accountability--with administration trying to improve and judge the teaching skills of school staff and with supervisors trying to aid novice and student teachers to sharpen their teaching techniques--such codification is necessary.

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A model for analyzing the interactions of the teaching act is essential for raising teachers' conscientiousness about the multitude of factors which constitute teaching. Once one has a model or paradigm of the basics of teaching, then one can take the successful lesson, dissect it, and determine what made it successful, thereby making it possible to create future lessons that have a greater possibility of achieving stated goals.

It seems to me that the following paradigm, which I have developed over a number of years, serves well the purpose of analyzing the interactions of the teaching act. It has been adapted from Lee J. Cronbach, "The Logic of Experiments of Discovery" (Stanford University, 1965), p. 2., (Mimeographed) and has been altered by suggestions of a colleague, Len Froyen, educational psychologist, University of Northern Iowa. The paradigm helps the user think about teaching in a way that includes the main components of teaching as well as the developmental and decentralizing concepts of Piaget.

Paradigm for Analyzing the Teaching Act

1 Subject matter of this nature, in this amount,* for this purpose,

2 with motivational activities and methodology of these types,

3 in this situation or setting, and

4 with a teacher with this disposition, this background, and these qualities and attitudes

5 produces these patterns of affective and cognitive learning

6 in students at this level of development and maturity,

7 with this kind of experience** and

8 with this kind of background.***

*Includes both content and time alloted for study
**Includes both reading experience and life experience
***Includes physical health, psychological, socio-economic, and cultural background

Let me illustrate how the paradigm is used. Let us suppose we are teaching Romeo and Juliet.

Subject matter of this nature	Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet
Subject matter in this amount	Play is cut to main scenes, i.e., feud scene, ball scene, balcony scene, killing of Mercutio and Tybalt, marriage night, and all of last act. Teacher tells what happens between these scenes, and study of play lasts two weeks or less
For this purpose	To have students enjoy Shakespeare
Motivation	Newspaper article of young love opposed by parents--discussion of times when parents disapproved of teen's friends, etc.
Methodology	No assignments in Shakespeare out of class (out-of-class work can be guided individualized reading); teacher first reads aloud to students; teacher comments on language, asks questions, etc. Students prepare some of the retained scenes and read. Records of balcony scene and tomb scene are used with no reading of them beforehand. Students read one scene in groups. Although all reading is done in class, there is a variety of methods of reading used. Zefferelli film is culminating activity.
In this situation or setting.	The school encourages teachers to be creative and individually responsible for classes; the setting is a pleasant classroom with lots of space for displays of Shakespearean material; and the class is the 3rd period, not first period in the morning, last period in the day, or near the lunch period.

With a teacher with this disposition, this background and these qualities and attitudes	The teacher is intelligent, is healthy, likes Shakespeare and students, wants all students to succeed at a higher level than when they arrived in her/his class, is flexible, is interested in students' opinions and reactions, can individualize instruction.
Produces a high level of cognitive and affective response in 90% of the students	Students can answer cognitive questions about Romeo and Juliet and Shakespeare. They also express liking for methods used to teach the play. Values, feelings, attitudes are generally positive.
In students at this level of development and maturity	These ninth graders are of average but heterogeneous intelligence; they are not mature for their age and they read between 6th and 12th grade levels.
With this kind of experience and interests	They like to read and read a fair amount of adolescent literature and some popular adult novels; they prefer adventure and romance. They have traveled in U.S. but not extensively and have had small-city types of experiences. Often interested in sports and camping.
With this kind of background	Class is predominantly middle class, with professional, blue collar, and white collar parents. Few students have attended plays in big cities; few have attended museums and art galleries; few come from homes where the New York Times, New Yorker, etc. are read. Physical health of students is generally good with a number going through life crises. Students are great movie-goers and record-buyers.

Although each of the items of the paradigm could be more fully developed than has been done, the above outline gives one an idea of how the paradigm can be filled in. It is my contention that if you change any one of the above items in the paradigm, you will change line 5--"produces these patterns of affective and cognitive learning." In other words, any change in the paradigm, changes the results of cognitive and affective learning. For example, if you change the first line's item "in this amount" from a cut version of Romeo and Juliet to

the full, uncut play, I believe you will change the kind of affective and cognitive response you will get from the students who are characterized in the last three lines of the paradigm. If you ask these kinds of students to read the play at home, you will also get lower cognitive and affective patterns of response.

In the same fashion, if the students' level of development changes, the teacher will have to make adjustments, perhaps in methodology, in order to keep the level of cognitive and affective response high. One such change might be a lower reading ability. In this case, the change in methodology might be to read Marchette Chute's prose tale of Romeo and Juliet (in Chute's Stories from Shakespeare) before the students actually look at the Shakespearean text. After the students read Chute or one student reads the story to the others (depending on students' reading skills), the teacher might, in addition, show a film strip of Romeo and Juliet so that when the students finally come to the Shakespearean language, they are familiar with what happens in the story and do not have two obstacles to hurdle. This would be particularly important for the purpose we have set forth in our example which is to have the students enjoy Shakespeare. Some teachers may want to use the film first if their students' skills in reading are low, then read the text, and finally show the film again when the reading is completed.

On the other hand, if the students in the class are college-bound, have wide reading backgrounds in adolescent literature with some background in popular and serious adult literature, are bright and highly motivated, with travel experience in all parts of the U.S. and some out-of-country travel, and are member of families who enjoy theater, opera, etc., then it is possible that the category "in this amount" could be altered to include some of the marvelous scenes where double entendres and puns create subtle and exciting

nuances in language, e.g., Juliet's scene with her mother just after Tybalt is killed and Romeo is banished.

Another example of how a change in one part of the pardigm will change the results of line 5--student learning--will be obvious to experienced teachers. The weeks just before Christmas vacation or during the state basketball finals when your school is a contender might not be favorable times to teach Romeo and Juliet--the situation in such cases may not be conducive to this kind of study. It is also possible that the teacher herself/himself may be exhausted just before Christmas and not at his/her best either. A teacher whose background is weak in Shakespeare or who worries about reading Shakespeare aloud may also have to change some aspects of the paradigm which was set up earlier in this paper. That teacher may want to change methodology to bring in an outside speaker or an outside reader early in the study or may need to rely more on filmed introductions to the play.

Heightened awareness by teachers of what factors are important to success in teaching may make it possible for them to see that for certain kinds of ninth-grade students (lines 6-8) who have difficulty in English, it may be the subject matter (A Tale of Two Cities) rather than the methodology (groups) that is contributing to the class's low achievement. Motivation based on "this is a great novel" or "you will fail the test and not get into college" may also be at fault.

No matter what the problem, the model aids us in seeing where the difficulty lies and where changes are needed in our teaching. If we have a behavioral objective which students can't meet (line 5) and we think it is achievable by the students described in lines 6-8, then we must check to see if the items in lines 1-3 are suitable for the kinds of students depicted in lines 6-8; we also need to ascertain how line 4--the kind of person we as teachers are--is

interacting with the items in lines 1-3 and 6-8.

Teaching is so complex that to depend on panaceas proffered by partisans, e.g., team teaching, elective courses, using the inductive method, etc., is futile. Because of the intricacy of teaching, one has to look not to panaceas but to the interactions between and among the many factors. This, the paradigm enables us to do; in fact, it may lead the way to a more effective method of assessing teaching through analysis of the teaching act itself. Socrates believed that the unexamined life is not worth living; maybe the unexamined teaching act is not worth performing.